The future
of Slenderverse

What's Inside?

I am Sophie

High Five Friends

Stephanie Lawson Stevens

&

The many pages of

Slenderman

INDEX

Magazine construction, design and layouts -Austeria

What's an ARG?

So, what is an ARG and how does it differ from other web series? ARG stands for alternate reality game, and it is played rather than simply being watched. That isn't to say that one doesn't watch an ARG, but they don't always have to. The experience comes from the interaction with the characters and world, as pieces of that world can be touched, influenced and altered. The story follows along with the interaction, in a fourth-wall breaking gesture. This can come in the form of character interaction, puzzles (hidden or in plain sight) or other games that affect the story they are set in.

Unfiction is similar in nature, but follows a clear-cut narrative. One can enter this world, but their influence is very limited, in relation to the main plot. One may even have characters within this world, but they must be tied in with the predetermined storyline.

Both of these game-like story genres are an unique form of art that allow those experiencing the stories to become immersed in their worlds. They become a part of them, and make real connections to the characters and places. It is an intense art experience, unlike so many others. Most importantly, at their core, they are deep, heartfelt stories used to express what we have so much trouble expressing in our normal lives.

Stories were born along with our thoughts at the dawn of man, following each and every step we took. They were our first love, and our first obsession. No matter one's age, class or ethnicity... It is the one great, unifying factor: Storytelling. No matter how broken our hearts may be, no matter how much we may have to endure in life, stories will always be there for us in a way that nothing else can be. They will dance with our hearts, and intertwine with our spirits, healing us when nothing else could ever hope to. Writings, plays, sculptures, paintings, videos, films—or whichever form they may take—these stories are more than a passion. They are humanity in the purest form. This is why I dedicate every available moment to these stories. My obsession extends beyond myself, beyond my cares, needs or reasoning. They are true freedom, they are unity, they are expression and they are the soul. The stories I share and tell are more of myself than this mortal shell could ever hope to be.

Article by
Lili Ardat

I have had the pleasure and honor of chronicling some of the biggest names in the scene for ARG Digest. I Am Sophie is yet another modern instant classic on what, looking back now, seems to have been a bit of a heyday for standout and breakout ARG content, the early 2020s. In retrospect, it's not at all hard to see why I Am Sophie was destined to grip the ARG scene as fiercely as it did. But visiting it five years later, it still punches above its weight. A weight already bulked up with gorgeous, influencer-style slick production value contrasted with the delightfully unsettling, grimiest of the grimey visuals that appear when the more analog aesthetics come creeping in, alongside the horror elements. Further buttressed with arresting characters, both written and portrayed, sinister and truly unnerving lore and a dreamy (dare I say "Lynchian" in the wake of his death) atmosphere of realties blending and breaking through each other. Yet even fully recognizing and appreciating the fine parts that sum it up, it remains that what is delivered is even more than that sum. The soul of the art touches you in ways that can be elusive to express, but the feelings they spark are unmistakable.

> "Sophie opines openly about the nature of being herself."

I Am Sophie begins as the vlog of a wealthy, young Londoner, flaunting her means and promoting herself as a clothing designer and model living the good life. Her brand's logo, YRP for "Young, Rich and Powerful" the initials posed over the points of a triangle instantly invoke cult vibes in design and dogma. Sophie opines openly about the nature of being herself. "When you're in the middle of a hurricane, you don't get to stop and look around and realize, 'Am I being real? Am I being me?'" For the first few entries it seems like the sort of self-involved self-reflection she asks herself while being, in fact, incredibly worldly and shallow. She also claims to "take a spiritual approach to everything in life," offering no evidence or examples.

Initial feelings when exposed to I Am Sophie are, of course, a matter of individual experience. As for me, the character of Sophie was immediately annoying. Vapidity, unearned wealth, every cliché of the worst aspects of a stereotype of a millennial influencer is paraded across her vlog. "The New Queen of YouTube." Who is this person? Who does she think she is? Building up antipathy is a classic play in horror, and with good reason. It works. I knew what was being set up from the start, but when Sophie's horrors eventually unfold, as the story progresses, seeing scorn and hate directed back at her with true vigor and malice, in edited videos and defacing her personal property with epithets, I saw my very uncomfortable reflection and felt that guilt and shame. The creators and actors help set this up by still managing for Sophie to have a bit of charm to her. There is an element of innocence to our shallow, little spoiled princess. She's easy with a smile and laugh, she has no coyness about her, so that once the screaming and terror begin your annoyances with her vanish and you only fear for her.

So how do we get from a spoiled princess reveling in her life of luxury and splendor to where we eventually find Sophie ending up, sobbing and screaming, terrorized and alone, somehow trapped in an attic not knowing how she got there and with no way out? By no straight line of events, logic, perspective or singular experience. Instead, this begins to go off the rails for Sophie when small clips of another young woman, in grainy analog, sitting alone in her room begin appearing in Sophie's blog. This woman, we eventually learn, is named Lara. Sophie and her video producer have no idea who this woman is or how the footage ended up in Sophie's vlog, but Lara reaches out and identifies herself. Sophie agrees to meet and investigate, but finds Lara to be behaving suspiciously and erratically. She claims to not know what is behind a locked door in her own home, and denies owning a cat despite having a bowl with food set out and a cat tree prominently positioned in the center of the flat where she lives. Strange noises and interference seemingly coming from upstairs and Lara's increasingly concerning behavior and unbelievable denials finally creep out Sophie and her team enough to leave, with Lara ending up physically grabbing and clinging to Sophie, sobbing and screaming at her exiting the door with cries to "Come back!" and "Please Sophie!"

Cut to a shaken Sophie and her cameraman filming back at her mansion, they check with each other to be sure the doors are locked. Sounds of movement are heard, and although they try to carry on with their filming, the situation escalates into a confrontation with the computer tech person from YRP Productions, now nearly naked and bloody, ranting of the swelling parasites in his brain. This kicks off a desperate run between the rooms of the mansion to escape, but going through the doors only leads to more encounters with him, now accompanied by some other creature in a suit, arms outstretched. Eventually she opens a door and is suddenly in the attic. It's dream logic, reality-jumping logic. This is not the attic of the mansion. This is a truly evil and dangerous place, a harvesting ground. This is when your heart beats faster in fear for Sophie.

We now switch to Lara, who seems to have taken over Sophie's YouTube, and we see her very different path and experience of these events and the YRP organization. This second act, protagonist switch-up mixed with the style of the editing and visual style of the emerging horror elements definitely gave me Lynch-influenced vibes, and I mean that as the highest of compliments. The repeated dialogue and their new context and horrifying implications further leans into the influence, and erases any lingering antipathy for Sophie, as what sounded vapidly annoying now seem like innocent chatter and bright wishes when held against what YRP actually is and does. But a full account of all that is beyond the scope of this article, which truly barely scratches the surface (and not to mention is best experienced firsthand.) But as you can see, you are in good hands for depth, flavor and mastery in this series. Sophie is Queen for a reason. The creators know exactly how to set it up and deliver, with killer style.

"This is a truly evil and dangerous place, a harvesting ground."

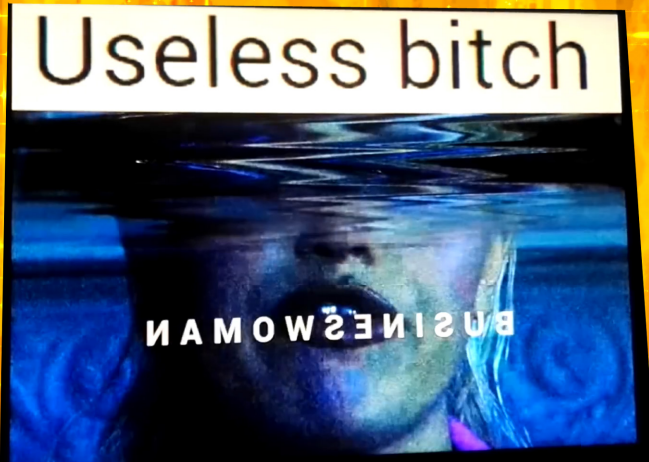*Images from the series*

$ I am Sophie

THE GUIDE to being YOUNG
RICH & POWERFUL

START

i am
SOPHIE

Creators/cast
 Tom Ransom, Dan Bolland
and Bibi Lucille
 (source: IMDB, fangoria)

Youtube:
@iamsophie
Twitter/"X":
@iamsophiereal
Instagram:
instagram.com/iamsophiereal

Useless bitch

BUSINESSWOMAN

High Five Friends

Article by
Lili Ardat

> ## "Hi friends! Don't you just love being yourself?"

As the lilting voice of KC Katalbas sings The White Stripes' "We Are Gonna Be Friends," a budding best-friendship montage plays out between our protagonist, Happy A. Contrary, and his co-worker, known as SU 957. The lyrics pop to life as these two go to the movies together and feed birds in the park. The scene's sweetness and humor call to mind the old, classic ad copy for great stories and films "You'll laugh, you'll cry!" By this point in the story we have been through a lot already with Happy, and already the breadth of technique in production, the richness of story, the various and unique styles of videos, the genuinely delightful humor, not to mention heartbreak, horror, mystery and even musical numbers, have left quite an impression. There is a richness of heart, in both the laughter and tears, poured directly into the mix of what makes High Five Friends one of those such great and satisfying stories. And it's backed up with an expertly-crafted, whirlwind ride.

Happy is presented to us at once enigmatically and wearing his pathos on his sleeve. A sickeningly sweet rendition of "If You're Happy And You Know It" follows a short monologue of Happy addressing the camera directly. "Hi friends! Don't you just love being yourself? I love to be myself. I'm so happy with my life. Aren't you?" His tone hints that he might be asking himself this, and beyond the rubber mask he wears, he still seems off. As the story and background of Happy is filled in, it's not long before we see that Happy is incredibly repressed and easily overloaded and overcome when trying to deal with his Logic and Emotions, or

Heart, personified by a gorilla and a young woman respectively. These two act as the proverbial Angel and Devil on Happy's shoulders, struggling between each other to guide Happy through his personal struggles and wrestling his inner demons. However, it's not entirely clear which is the Devil and which is the Angel, if such an assumption is even appropriate to make in this dichotomy.

The decisions of who to listen to, Logic or Heart, is a recurring theme and was left up to the players to decide. In either case, they appear to be unbalanced and poor guides. When Happy decides to listen to Heart and check on his missing co-host, Tiffany, after he has a blind date with her and she disappears and won't answer his calls, Logic warns of escalation and hints that Happy has an obsessive streak that could develop into stalker-like behavior. He even hints that he might have hurt people in the past.

Heart scoffs at the warnings, but when Happy goes to find and speak with her, Heart does exactly what Logic feared. "Lick her door frame." "Now break in and check on her." Heart seems to have a sadistic streak towards Happy, later making him pursue romance on a dating app when he clearly is not comfortable or ready. She further escalates things by demeaning and degrading him, a masochistic streak played out as the sadism of his Heart towards himself.

He is worthless without love, worthless without Heart, she tells him, having him grovel. When Logic has his day, however, things arguably end up worse. The retribution for a cruel and deceitful bully of a Heart is one of the darkest chapters of the story. Made even sadder and more horrible knowing that it is, in the end, Happy abusing himself and his own mind, soul and emotions. Happy is a classic victim of bullying. The platonic ideal of a pushover, his pay is garnished by his corrupt producer and boss with the flimsiest of excuses and hand-waving about taxes and any other excuse that pops into his mind to screw Happy out of his wages or otherwise exploit him on the job. Being exploited and cast aside without care, we find out, is a lifelong pattern for Happy. Whether being told in school he was never good enough, or being sold into surgical experimentation by his father to the ever-shady mega-corporation Solcorp, it's not hard to see just why Happy has a desperate need to be loved that can drive him to madness or even violence.

This is not to say the High Five Friends is all tragedy and horror. Far from it. Even in its darkest events, there is plenty of wry humor to be had. Delightfully catchy original tunes, often taking cues in style from 80s-style synth pop, show up in episodes more often than not. Humor and peppy energy bounce off the screen, from the jingles Happy sings while doing his job as an actor in advertisements for Solcorp, to a triumphant flight through the skies when he finally listens to Logic and "deals" with the troublesome Heart. The lyrics are often hilarious, but also heartfelt. And when Heart makes Happy punch the clock on a dating app, the soul-crushing grind of constant rejection is shown alongside a colorful cast of characters that Happy matches and has (mostly) absurd interactions with, including at least two vtubers.

Happy asks one what it's like to be a cartoon and if they smell of static. To others, he cannot seem to not overshare how much he loves blood. "I like that it powers the living," he explains at one point. And while running away from investigating Tiffany's house, he can't help but hoot like a true maniac before scrambling from the scene. All of this takes place against the backdrop of a murder mystery and conspiracy that unfolds. Happy's new co-host, SU 957, is in fact an elite "700" unit sent to track the mystery of the so called "Smiley Face Killer," which it turns out Tiffany was a victim of, and keep an eye on Happy himself. But as luck would have it, they develop a true friendship, which brings us back to the heartwarming scene where we came in. The humor, the unraveling of the mystery and drama, and Happy at last having a true and caring friend all build up to a climactic showdown to be revealed in the final episode, yet to be released. High Five Friends delivers and satisfies on so many different levels, and you can't help but fall for Happy's charm as he faces hardships and triumphs on his journey. The Heart wants what the Heart wants, and only fools rush in, but if you dive in with abandon and give Happy a chance, I know he will capture your heart as well. I can tell that you two are gonna be friends.
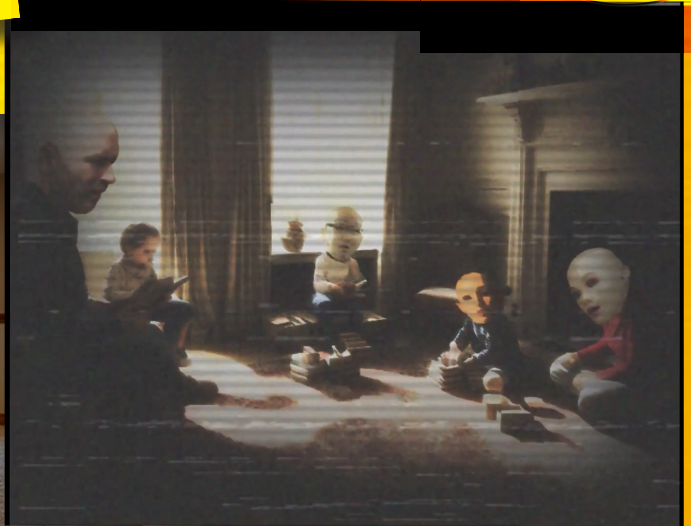
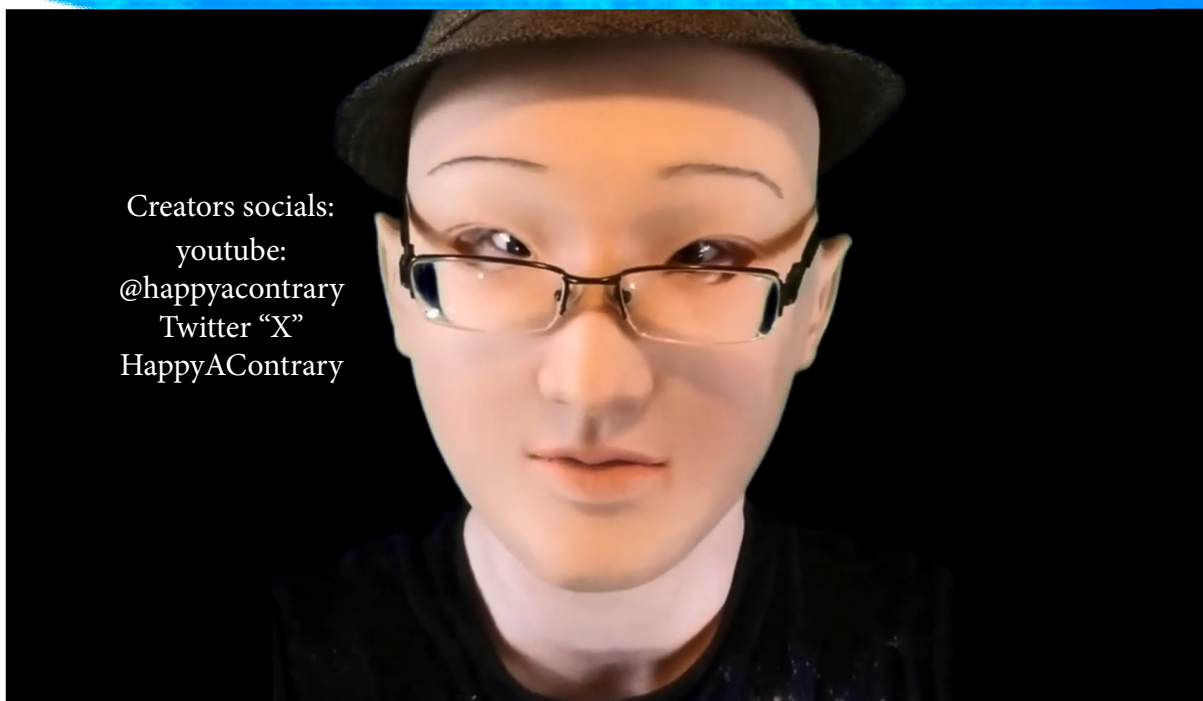> "The Heart wants what the Heart wants, and only fools rush in"

Images from High five friends

When I first moved herE...

WITH NO ARTIFICIALS OR FLAVORS

OKAY...

Creators socials:
youtube:
@happyacontrary
Twitter "X"
HappyAContrary

Stephanie Lawson Stevens

Article by
Chandler Arndt

This article will cover the first main arc of Stephanie Lawson Stevens in detail and overview the rest of the project.

The trailhead for this ARG was a 2018 Facebook profile named "Stephanie Stevens"* - and her mass spam friend requests and messages, primarily to users in Mississippi (United States). The profile claimed her immediate goal was to reach five thousand friends, the maximum allowed on Facebook.

> "Stephanie also reached out to players through an Instagram profile and other bespoke websites."

Conversations between players and Stephanie confirmed she is familiar with concepts like computer programming and viruses. Puzzles in certain Facebook posts led to visual novels about Stephanie and other characters - Jennifer, Dianna, and Allison - but later messages to the profile about these characters received assertions that those characters are also "Stephanies." For this reason, players refer to them as "alters," named after the alter identity symptom common in people with a dissociative identity disorder. ARG players will probably find themselves right at home so far. Social media spam, as a tool to reach high numbers of players quickly, going all the way back to the concept of chainmail. The sexygirlmax2019 Tumblr ARG deliberately resembled a bot for this purpose. Visual novels are a common tool for metafictional online storytelling - think Doki Doki Literature Club, the point-and-click features of the "Unedited Footage of a Bears" Clarydril website, or even Rhee's Rapture.

Stephanie also reached out to players through an Instagram profile and other bespoke websites. Characters from the visual novels began appearing with their own social media profiles, including Alice (who has a Twitter account) and Anne (who has a Tumblr blog). Another character, Jennifer Robin Mountzouris, hijacked Stephanie's Facebook page, which is more of a deliberate creative choice than usual.

Unfiction projects typically create multiple social media profiles to give the story a sense of narrative momentum. Players can check in on different characters, learn information from different points of view, and piece the plot together. Subplots receive their own dedicated digital spaces. The Don't Feed The Muse ARG connected each of its subplots as its monster spread, as an example. But when an unfiction project has multiple social media profiles, players are at significant risk of not finding important plot information.

To fix this, projects often use a hijacking event - when one in-game account interacts with, commandeers, or otherwise offers insight into the plot of another in-game account. This can also help the audience confirm an account is not a random troll, virus, or gamejacker, but part of the game. The Slenderverse antagonists, including Marble Hornets's "totheark", EverymanHYBRID's "HABIT," and DarkHarvest00's "KindVonDerRitter," all have similar hijacking events on the main social media profiles of those web series. We know Stephanie Lawson Stevens is using multiple social media profiles, so it doesn't need a hijacking event. But it receives one anyway, in the form of a "Homecoming" Facebook poll that destroyed all in-game Facebook profiles except Stephanie's and ended the first story arc.

The story began its second arc in August 2018 with a text-based RPG and more Facebook activity, with Stephanie regaining control of the main Facebook page. She also resurrects the other profiles. Stephanie instructs players to change their Facebook names to "Stephanie Stevens," and players with high numbers of Facebook friends, who do so, receive more interactions. Interactions are called "umbrellas" to protect players from an oncoming "flood" - more imagery that calls to mind projects like Marble Hornets and my own Box Elder Public Library. The Instagram account also posted new coded messages in September and October 2018 that players connected to an obituary page with more codes.

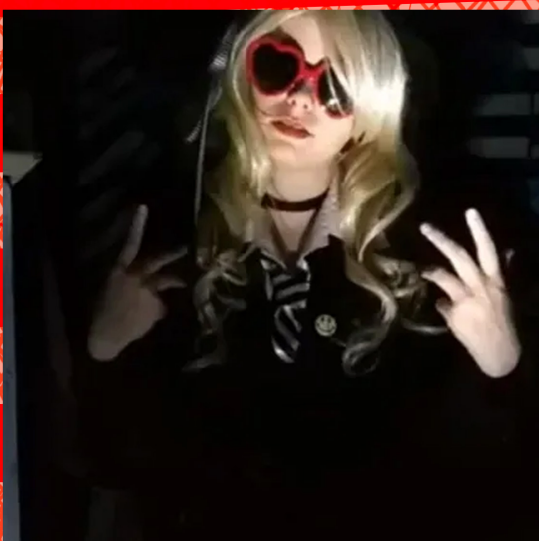> "Sometimes, alternate reality games forget that they are not just narratives but are interactive"

These messages are from a new character "The Televangelist," who opposes Stephanie integrating with the other characters. But the true work is only done when everyone is Stephanie.

All of the other unfiction projects I've compared "Stephanie Lawson Stevens" to so far also share themes of mental health (either in its human characters or monsters). My previous article "The Brain-Eaters" explores the appeal of these themes in alternate reality games, and "Stephanie Lawson Stevens" is another good example. This project relies on the social roleplay aspects of unfiction projects, and those tools are used well. That's not to say the project is personable. Stephanie never quite feels human in her messages. Sometimes, alternate reality games forget that they are not just narratives but are interactive, especially in their earliest stages. The character has goals that they want to achieve - but you also have to design goals for players. Visual novels and other mini-games can satisfy players in the short term. We know Stephanie wants to assimilate other social media profiles and—transcend. How do players help her achieve that? What information are we looking for? What puzzles are we solving? When we break codes, what do we learn? If it's a social game, are we getting character or lore rewards in equal measure to player effort? Do we at least know we're on the right track? What are we doing, besides following her on Facebook? It's not clear.

The game is not easily replayable - the original Facebook profile is not public anymore. As of 2019, the game is on hiatus and likely discontinued. Reports from players also suggest that the Facebook profile may have been removed for breaking the social media platform's spam guidelines.

That's ultimately how I feel about "Stephanie Lawson Stevens" as a whole. It's like getting a computer virus: a fantastic hook to bring you in, a confusing middle, and nothing to show for it at the end. The value of this series comes from the execution of the elements, more so than the outcome of the story.

Images from the series
Stephanie Lawson Stevens

CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY!!!

IN THIS ISSUE

What is a smile?

Where do smiles come from and where do they go?

Why should you smile?

Are smiles infectious? :)

What are endorphins?

Endorphins are hormones produced by your nervous system. They are classified into three main categories; Alpha, Beta, and Gamma. What we're here to talk about, however, are Beta endorphins. Probably the ones with the most important roles in your body. They are released in response to hunger, pain, exhilaration, sexual pursuits, and pleasure. These endorphins act on the opiate receptors in the brain and are staggeringly similar to morphine. But morphine is bad and addictive isn't it? Aren't endorphins the same way? No, silly, endorphins are natural. Given to us by God. They are God's way of giving us a reward for doing the things we were put on this earth to do. Experience. We are put through pain and trials, but overcoming them gives us endorphins. We exercise and better ourselves, endorphins. We reproduce for our God and he rewards us with endorphins. Here at Church of God of Prophecy we seek to stimulate those hormones as much as possible in our everyday life. In doing so we take God into our lives and bodies and accept his gifts he gives to us. We do so together because endorphins strengthen social groups and what social group is stronger than a church?

What does this have to do with smiling, though?

Socials
Youtube:
@xkmtudfnvtejvgsjbiihfx9840

Facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/
iamstephaniestevens

Twitter "X"
@0ne_4_a77
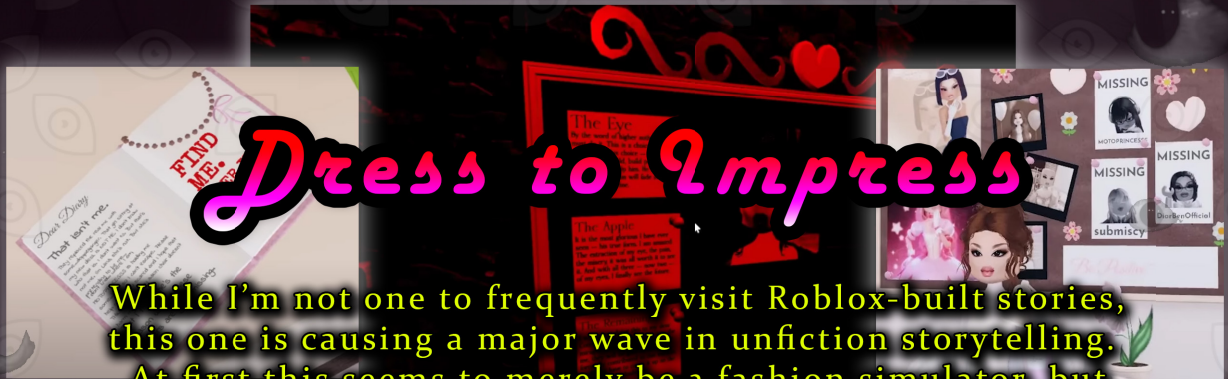
Welcome to <u>THE EYES ON YOU</u> portal!

<u>What is this section all about?</u>

Let's face it… There are so many great
series out there, in the various subgenres
we cover, that it's nearly impossible to
highlight every work that deserves a
shout-out.

This section will focus on those series
as well as many up-and-coming and
smaller projects that one simply

<u>MUST KEEP THEIR EYES ON.</u>

Dress to Impress

While I'm not one to frequently visit Roblox-built stories,
this one is causing a major wave in unfiction storytelling.
At first this seems to merely be a fashion simulator, but
players will soon begin to notice that a festering darkness
clings to the underbelly of this world. Hidden objects and
other Easter eggs (such as a poster board with missing persons
listed, a "meat room" hidden behind male mannequins and monsters
depicted behind select models in certain portraits) reveal a
sinister story regarding cults, corporations taking advantage
of desperate individuals, other forms of betrayal, revenge for
said betrayals, a race for power through dark magic and human sacrifices.

This ARG is ongoing and growing rapidly as unsuspecting gamers
stumble upon the hidden elements of this game. If you enjoy the
idea of "games within games" this is the ARG game for you. Even
if that isn't your sort of thing, the sheer amount of hidden lore
within this game is enough to enthuse even the most seasoned ARG
player and hidden story buff. Par to the course for this particular
set of ARG series, this game is heavily fashion focused and
definitely dresses to impress. Even the darker elements are
absolutely fabulous. It's easy to see why this series is creating
such a stir in the community.

While this world extends to YouTube, various Roblox games,
user profiles on various social media websites and more, all you have
to do to start your journey on this trail is to check out the nail salon
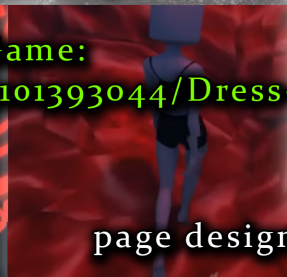in the main game. THEY will find you from there.

The Main Game:
https://www.roblox.com/games/15101393044/Dress-To-Impress

information and image
selection by G.P Reeds

page design by G.P Reeds

Don't Hide the Vibe:
An Aesthetic Deconstruction of ARGs

Article by
Aaron Albright

A warehouse baked in a crimson hue, obscuring the blood pooling around the drain. A data-moshed visage who begins to speak in tongues (binary). The $75 Sony camcorder you stole from your parents to start an art project, and the entire DCode.fr website. All wrapped in a beautiful base-64 encoded ribbon.

When we think about the image we put out as ARG writers, these items and more play a pivotal role. Even if you're not using any of the above, I'd wager to assume you're messing with these expectations. Because in all lines of creative work, ours especially, image is everything.

This leads into an interesting question: how did we distill our self-image and build our genre-wide aesthetics to what they are now in the last 20 years since the medium's inception??

All creative mediums use specific techniques to elicit a particular response. In film, if you'd like to express feelings of vertigo, and the world screeching to a halt, you'd use a Hitchcock zoom. To highlight a subject in the frame, a director might use framing from the environment to draw attention to the focal point of the scene.

So what tongues have we learned to speak in? The answer is, of course, codes and ciphers. These are the main literary flair we use (and abuse) to invoke the reactions we'd like. But why specifically codes? Why not put together a scavenger hunt like a geocaching event? Why aren't we using the same format to test the stress of the system, like a game show that's been syndicated 15 years after it should have disappeared from the network with a whimper?

Allow me to indulge my inner armchair psychologist, if you will. I argue that we use codes, and other obtuse methods to conceal the narrative as a proof of concept. Unfortunately, we are an "outsider artform." Aside from Cicada 3301, the Harry Styles/"Eroda" snafu, or the founder of 8chan agreeing with Marjorie Taylor-Greene that "ARGs are why QAnon is so powerful," we aren't taken seriously by the general public. (Yes, the last one happened. No, I don't have the receipt on me. But trust me, it was WILD.)

> "a director might use framing from the environment to draw attention to the focal point of the scene."

As such, we're distrusting of the mainstream audience, and for valid reasons. I believe we use codes for two reasons; one practical, and one psychological. Practically, it makes sense to make your audience work to solve the narrative. This also weeds out anybody who isn't willing to look at anything past binary, base-64, or a shitty Viginere key. It ensures that the narrative bits and pieces we feed to our divers are respected, and not given to somebody who's gonna hit you with a torrent of bad-faith criticism and strawman arguments as to why "ARGs aren't real art." It's collateral, it's how you know your audience is diving, and not just dipping and skipping.

Codes act as a secret handshake, a speakeasy's passphrase, and a decryption tool for the narrative, all at once. The codes/tongues we use also influence the aesthetic: why would you specifically use a Dancing Man cipher over something more basic, like base-encryption? Why are we double-coding the harder, more juicy bits of the narrative with additional layers of obfuscation?

Are you trying to tell a story, or hide a story so well from the fans that you feel like a CIA encryption expert? The audience will know which way you feel. I promise you. Keep it in mind. Redactions for zero purpose at all are a cheap way to try and ratchet narrative tension. Just look at the first initial posts on the SCPWiki, for example. Any entry from 002-999 is filled with redactions and black boxes, even when they make NO effort to add to the story. Now, when you look at a recent SCP, the redactions mean something. Authors are so damn good at using this tool, that now, they can redact entire sentences, and still give you the information that was contained within, if you're paying close enough attention.

They've turned something that acted as a form of gatekeeping and authorial un-intent into a powerful narrative language in itself, one wholly unique to how the SCPWiki functions and operates.

I think we should take notice. Especially considering the SCPWiki has a STRONG baller ass aesthetic.

The psychological reason echoes the practical one, but expounds on the concept that we, as authors, are hiding something we hope will be found.

I vividly remember banging my head against a wall for days thinking about my puzzles. I wanted to use weird, obscure ciphers as an artificial difficulty spike. And every single time, one of two things would happen: either the puzzle was solved within the first 5 minutes of going live, due to a crazy skilled group of divers, or the cipher itself had a grammatical issue that made it impossible to solve the way it was intended.

> **"The audience will know which way you feel. I promise you. Keep it in mind."**

Ideally, I wanted to send early hard puzzles out into the ether, and slowly give hints towards solving their grand structure. Why? Simple: if people online can decipher the tongues and codes I speak, and still comprehend and respect what I had to say, why couldn't that be the case outside of the screen?

We don't hide these things with the intent of never being found. We want somebody, anybody to crack the code. Because maybe then, the tongues we speak in could be cracked just as easily.

We aren't retreating to fortresses of solitude here. We're hoping for a linguistic hero, one who makes sense of the unreality of our lives outside of this medium. After all, we don't hide something that isn't of intense personal weight without reason.

And if we are hiding useless information, then maybe we deserve to dither away in the dark, secluded away from the mainstream audience, subject to 12 views at a time. Our aesthetics give us one choice: are you burying your narrative, or hiding it?

SABRINA MILLER

Sabrina Miller is a delightfully dark, Instagram-based account detailing the struggles of a girl who is truly not like any you've met before. Sabrina is not quite human, and not quite even from Earth. She can somewhat mimic the shape of a human, but the effect is uncanny to say the least. And as an alien away from home, living among us and (as her followers soon found out) feeding on us. Sabrina has struggles of all kinds, some of which we ourselves might never have imagined, and some that seem all too human.

Sabrina was brought here to Earth by a "friend" of hers named Richard, back in the 1950s. Beginning with him, her first human friend, she has struggled with interacting with humans and navigating relationships with them. Her fearsome form and dangerous nature belie her heartfelt desire to be enough as she is and be accepted. Her attitudes and interactions with humans are complex – at times contemptuous for us as a species for our failures at stewardship of the planet, predatory, disgusted by our aptitude for cruelty, yet also friendly, fond, and even protective and regretful of her more deadly ways.
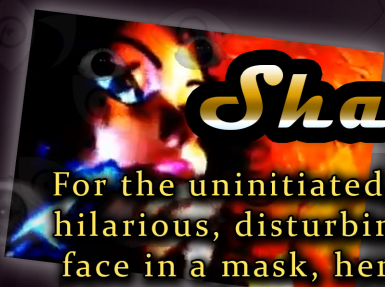
Featuring gorgeous pics, props and artwork, delightfully inventive lore, and a fantastically-written, scary and stylish character that might just as likely end up your savior or doom, Sabrina Miller is an absolute must-follow.
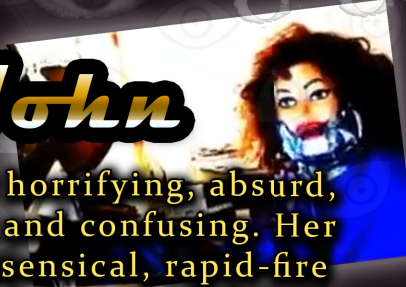
Instagram Account:
https://www.instagram.com/sabrinamiller230/

information and image
selection any Lili Ardat

page design by
G.P Reeds

Shaye Saint John

For the uninitiated, Shaye Saint John may appear horrifying, absurd, hilarious, disturbing, and above all, disorienting and confusing. Her face in a mask, her jumbled, false limbs, the nonsensical, rapid-fire inane chatter, the unsettling words and personal energy of chaos and a deeply broken person - Shaye makes her presence known. Often talking the ear off of everyone she knows with her obsession of the day, Shaye rambles at 100 mph about some sort of person, product or hot new trend with a dubious name and no further explanation. Dimly defined things like "Skin Tape" or "Burger Money" are mixed into chant and song from Shaye's excited, ridiculous chatter. Flailing, shrieking, awkwardly repeating phrases like "Hello Everyone," her demeanor takes the tone as if she were hosting a segment on a variety show. Instead of where she and we are, trapped in some sort of fever dream in the harrowing suburban hells she seems to inhabit. The maximalist filmmaking brainchild of Eric Fournier, Shaye Saint John is an outright assault on the senses. From the essence of the character's inane, frenetic, nonstop, nonsensical utterings, to the editing style to the sampling and music - this is "weirdcore" to the weirdest. From a time when YouTube was still young, and experimentation with strange and bold art was considered a prime potential and most obvious use of the new platform, it stands as damning contrast and refreshment when faced against the more modern landscape of commercialization and "content creation." Is it horror? Is it comedy? Is it genius art? Is it stark raving nonsense? Yes to all. But above all that, it's a stone cold classic in avant-garde filmmaking and internet weirdness. Mandatory viewing for all who worship at the temple of the weird.

YouTube Channel:
https://www.youtube.com/@ShayeSaintJohnArchives

information and image
selection by Lili Ardat

page design by
G.P Reeds

MARBLE HORNETS

One of the first Slenderman unfiction projects,
starting about a week after the original forum post
that created the character. The first Slenderman video-centric
web series. A student film crew is stalked by both their Slenderman
monster "the Operator" and the film's former director, turned paranoid
and desperate to stop the monster from spreading to other people.

The philosopher Alfred North Whitehead is credited with saying
that European philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato.
In many ways, a significant amount of unfiction from the
2010s is a series of footnotes to Marble Hornets. Exposition
with white text on black background - though Marble Hornets
resists this, especially in its introduction video with live footage.
Abandoned buildings and locations.
Teleportation on screen and Operator appearances look like camera
glitches -

though Marble Hornets uses this technique sparingly until it approaches
its finale. A mysterious character, "totheark",presents codes and old film
footage messageson a secondary YouTube channel.
The visual language of Marble Hornets is still one of the more well-known,
repeated and referenced styles on the internet.

Find the series on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/@MarbleHornets

information and image
selection by Chandler Arndt

page design by G.P Reeds

DARK HARVEST (DARKHARVESTOO)

The first video in this Slenderverse YouTube series shows the door of a house slamming shut on its own and locking its inhabitant in from the outside. The inhabitant, Chris, thinks this is a ghost. When he shows the video to his friend, Alex, who jokes that the sound is from someone breaking in, they don't know how right they are. Chris receives pictures of his house, including his bedroom window, and a note in Latin about "meeting death." Chris discusses this incident with Alex, and they both mention feeling cold when their thermostat reads out at a comfortable 75 degrees Fahrenheit.

Doors that lock on their own? Feeling cold for no justifiable reason? Chris starting to record himself sleeping because he thinks someone is in the room with him? We've met our saboteur before our monster this time. TVTropes refers to the series as a "radio drama at some points" because of how darkly lit and obscured certain videos are, and I'm inclined to agree with them. Add in a prophecy of Chris and Alex's deaths, a cult that often feels like it spans all of New Jersey, and punishing sound effects whenever Slenderman appears (be ready to lower your volume at a moment's notice!). The series has seemingly started its four-part finale as of June 2024, with a second part released in November 2024. I can't believe I'm saying this in 2025, but watch for the end of DarkHarvestoo!.

YouTube channel:
https://www.youtube.com/@DarkHarvestoo

information and image selection by Chandler Arndt

page design by G.P Reeds

Executioner

X

Series Artwork
by
Austeria

"The Humble Roots of Slenderverse"

Interview by G.P Reeds

— Chris of Dark Harvest

How does someone approach a topic like Slenderman? An urban legend turned cultural phenomenon. A story that birthed an entire subgenre. Simply looking into one of the series in the vast sea of creative endeavors would be a disservice to one of the very cornerstones of what makes ARG and unfiction what they are today. So, I took a different approach, starting with one of the "founding fathers" of what ultimately became the Slenderverse.

Dark Harvest was one of the three main series that caused the Slenderverse to branch out into a full-fledged subgenre, following the first series 'Marble Hornets.' You, Christ, as the creator of Dark Harvest are considered one of the founding fathers of the Slenderverse. What inspired you to take up this mantle?

By the time I entered the game with Dark Harvest, along with my co-writer Alex, there was already a community established, making series. We were active on the unfiction forums, in what I believe was called the 'Slenderman Mythos' subforum at the time. This was around 2010. Marble Hornets had been around for almost two years, with Everyman Hybrid having been established as the "other big series" of that time. When Alex and I first started, we initially wanted to make a video series (not particularly a Slenderman series) inspired by found footage horror akin to The Blair Witch Project and Paranormal Activity, both of which I had recently seen. We knew that we wanted this idea to be original though, and had toyed around with the idea of a new ghost or cryptid at the forefront of the series. What happened is that someone had posted a trailhead to the Slenderman Mythos subforum, describing our series as a Slenderman series. Everyone seemed to respond well to that. Having an audience from the Slenderman community, we transitioned the series into a Slenderman series. The Slenderman community was still developing and evolving at that exact moment, and so we grew along with it at the foundation.

I'm honored that our series is considered among the 'founding fathers' regardless. It's strange because when we started Dark Harvest, Everyman Hybrid was ongoing, It had been active for a little less than a year. By that time, we considered it to be a fully-entrenched series, and we were the "new kids" so they were in a class of their own. We were the next gen and would always be on the periphery. Only in retrospect, did we realize that we were a core part of the movement.

Speaking to the uniqueness of Dark Harvest, I noticed your series was an early adopter to incorporating ARG puzzles that could be solved by the players (viewers) and also by the characters within the series itself. What brought that idea into play?

ARG elements always played a huge part in the design and structure of writing this series. Marble Hornets and EMH (Everyman Hybrid) incorporated a lot of 'true ARG' elements, playing

a larger part in their series. We didn't strive as hard to make it an integral part, but more of a sidequest. You can choose to dig deeper into the hidden documents, such as books written by the 6th Enclave, but the story would work itself out for the most part. That's why the in-story characters were able to solve the puzzles, and in some cases go a step further, like with the character-exclusive dewey decimal puzzle in the library. The canon went as deep as you wanted it to go, but it was all still canon to the central story. No matter how you experienced the series, those elements would be at the core of the narrative itself. To keep the series with one foot in reality and one foot in fiction, we also included elements like the cult growing due to so many people being exposed to Dark Harvest, breaking the fourth wall to bring a different form of realism into the mix. It wasn't so much that we wanted to bring something new to the table as the idea of being a 'game master' seemed like a daunting task. That's the main reason we presented the puzzles to the viewers, but then solved them in the series ourselves.

A lot of people give series like yours credit for the later popularity of analog horror web series, stemming from the Slenderverse. Would you agree with that statement?

I was watching a lot of a show called 'Ancient Aliens' at the time when the episode of our series that I think you're talking about came into play. I wanted to create an episode of one of those shows that was focused on our monster. That was the idea behind it. And I think there is something inherently creepy about stumbling upon an old VHS tape with something on it that just doesn't seem right. It shouldn't exist. It was just something that was "in the air" at the time. People tend to have ideas simultaneously but in different environments. Chances are, that episode of Dark Harvest wasn't the spawning point of analog horror projects that we see today, despite the fact that it might be one of the earliest examples. Kris Straub's work with Local 58 is where the subgenre really exploded. He has gone on to say that his work was heavily inspired by old public service announcements. Again, there was just something in the air that was waiting to catch fire. It's not something that can be traced exclusively to Slenderman. It's cool though, to have developed alongside them. I really like analog horror conceptually. It feels like the newer iteration to what the Slenderverse was when I was younger, almost 15 years ago at this point.

How does it feel to still be making Dark Harvest episodes 15 years after the first episode?

I didn't think I'd be doing this for as long as I have. When I started this I was a teenager, and I just started it because it was fun. We actually had plans on ending the series several times, update #6 being one of those potential endings. The fact that it has gone on as long as it has is really crazy to me. Sometimes, I forget how much of my life has been dedicated to this project. Some of my best friends I met through this community. In a roundabout way, I ended up meeting my wife thanks to the Slenderverse. The Slenderverse has had a major impact on my life. The best decision I ever made was to pick up a camera one day and start making Dark Harvest.

Dark Harvest will officially end in 2025, ending an era as the last of the ongoing founding Slenderverse series.

The Return of The Tall One

Alex Hera The Slenderman Documentarian

Interview by G.P Reeds

One simply can't deny that the Slenderverse is at the core of what made the ARG/unfiction mode of storytelling what it is today. Stepping away from that initial spark of inspiration, let's take a look at what some are describing the "Slenderverse reignition" and one of the projects that started this movement. Let's check in with the creator of the recent, popular Slenderman documentary series, Alex Hera.

Before we begin talking about the Slenderman documentary series and the resurgence of the Slenderverse that followed, let's explore the why and when you became a documentarian.

The long and short of it is that it developed naturally in my journey as a filmmaker and storyteller. I've been telling stories since I was a child. Late elementary school or early middle school, I discovered the Slenderverse and Marble Hornets and other ARGs. So, from an early age, I was inundated with immersive storytelling on the internet. I started making films in 2018, and one of my key inspirations was unfiction and alternate reality games. In the summer of 2019, I tried to make my own ARG, inspired by series like Everyman Hybrid, Hi I'm Mary Mary, Daisy brown and Local 58. Though I ended up scrapping that series, I released my first ARG the following year entitled 'Walker Creek.' It was my first experience with creating a large-scale film project. After that was created, I had a lot to say about the ARG creation experience, and so I decided to create a documentary about the making of Walker Creek. It was really just my processing of what it takes to create an ARG. Making an ARG or really any creative project, being part of a subculture—it can be kind of intense. Especially, if you really dedicate your mind and soul to it. Going back to my documentary regarding the making of Walker Creek, I really enjoyed the experience of documenting real events, of peeling back the curtain behind the creative process. So, I decided I wanted to do it again starting with an analog horror documentary. I wanted to sort of go back to the source of what inspired me to get into ARGs.

No one was really documenting this new wave of unfiction that was coming up at the time. I knew it would be something meaningful to the community and to myself. That was very well received, and I enjoyed the process greatly again. So, I decided to do another one. Slenderverse felt right, because it had inspired me from such a young age and had been very formative for me as a storyteller.

Post 2014, the Slenderverse became perceived very differently. There was so much to be said about the community that had spawned this character that was being ignored due to the tragedies that had unfolded. There were so many people with unique and personal stories about their experiences with ARGs. No one was properly exploring this, and so I decided to be the one to do it. I wanted to do this community justice. Instead of going with a more mainstream perspective, I wanted to get into the heads of the people who made it. There's a lot of meaning in that. I get so many comments of people expressing how these people's stories inspire them. They understand the ARGs and unfiction better after watching my documentaries.

So, when did the resurgence of Slenderverse start? I know your work inspired it heavily, but it wasn't the only factor in the revival.

Shout out to Valeria Santiago (creator of Slender For Gender, alongside K) who also played a major role in reviving the Slenderverse and keeping it alive.

June 2024 was a big month for the Slenderverse: We had the docuseries and Out of Game, we had the Marble Hornets book and we had the Dark Harvest revival. It was a flurry of activity out of nowhere. Following that, there was an almost immediate reaction from the fanbase. A large number of new creators emerged with their own Slenderverse projects that June into July. It's not as flashy as it was. It's not this monolith of internet culture anymore, but we have this community of dozens (if not hundreds) of creators who have formed their own little corner of the internet, making Slenderman stuff because they love it. We're seeing a new (or newly revived) community continue to build upon the legend. Will it last forever? I don't know. There's not a world where I can't imagine at least one person off in a corner writing a Slenderman story. In that sense, it might live on forever. All of that to say, I don't think it's impossible that it might reach the level of popularity it was once on, because it's a good legend. All it takes is one person with the right talent, style and idea to come along and create something incredible.

Where do you think ARG/unfiction would be without Slenderman?

I can't say that it would be drastically different, but it would be different. The Slenderverse brought so many people into ARGs and unfiction. The sheer impact on the size of the fanbase and the composition of the fanbase, and therefore the composition of the creators because creators tend to come from being a fan first, would definitely make a difference. The impact on all of that from the Slenderverse can't be understated. I think it would be much smaller just because of how many people the Slenderverse grabbed and molded to our scene. The concepts weren't new concepts pre-Slenderman, but the focus may have settled on different elements of the ARG and unfiction genres. Slenderman brought many of these elements together, but some of these elements would have naturally come together regardless.

Even if Slenderman doesn't return to the center stage, where would you like to see ARG/unfiction inspired by the Slenderverse proceed?

I'd like to see new and original stories. You can be inspired by something, but don't copy. We see a lot of that in unfiction. I understand the concept, there's nothing wrong with starting there. We all have to start somewhere. That said, the most important thing is to make art that's your own. Do something that's meaningful to you and has purpose for you. You don't have to follow a mold because other people do it. Trust your instincts. It might not always work out, but you can only grow as an artist by being creative. Don't be afraid to test the boundaries. It's the experimental and personal aspects of ARG/unfiction that makes it what it is.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Interview
by G.P Reeds

Rainer, Slenderman historian and modern creator/player

It's clear that the Slenderverse had a profound impact on the beginnings of the ARG/unfiction community, and has helped form it into the creative outlet we enjoy so much today, but where is it going from here? Will it dissolve as it intertwines with the various subgenres that sprung forth from it, or will it once again become a primary subgenre in its own right? Could Slenderverse light the way for future branches of the genre, as new ideas bud and give life to new subgenres? Let's have a chat with someone intertwined and deeply rooted at the core of the modern Slenderverse movement and see what they have to say about the future.

What could be considered the "original Slenderverse" is essentially ending with Dark Harvest and a new wave of creators are emerging from these inspirational sources that rekindled the flame, such as the Slenderman Documentary series by Alex Hera and Slender For Gender run by Valeria Santiago and K (creator of Hi I'm Mary Mary). So, where are things headed from this new starting line?

The academic part of me wants to fight the distinction between the "two waves of creation" because there definitely are two waves. There are distinct visual styles to both of them. If I were to give credit for the rekindled interest in the Slenderverse, I would be inclined to give credit to Valeria Santiago and K, over the documentary series. I believe that the documentary did a lot, but Slender For Gender was the inception point for that rekindling. I know that because there are at least ten creators in the Slenderverse creators group who started making Slenderverse content because of Slender For Gender, or encountered the original material as it was being cycled again due to Slender For Gender and the rising interest of Slenderman videos on TikTok. They did not encounter the documentary series first. They were already making series when it was posted. Val has done an astronomical amount for the community in the interim of its time. She is arguably the main person that stuck with the Slenderverse, and kept it alive, in spite of the tragedy that happened in Wisconsin. More than that, she is someone who will go up to people and tell them that they should still make a Slenderman series despite the negative connotations now associated with Slenderman. I have an astronomical amount of respect for Val's contributions.

At the core of the Slenderman there is the question: "How do you want to handle him?" In the last Slenderverse those options centered around if one should make him a plot device or a mystery or if he should be handled as a character. In this particular wave, the question's focus has changed into "Is he a tall white man in a suit or is he a tall 'blank' man in a suit?" What you choose to do with him, because of that, is going to be different critically. A lot of times he will be the stand-in for both. He will sometimes be the blank, he will sometimes be the uncanny, he will sometimes be the thing that is unknown, and he will sometimes be hegemonic violence and oppression. You can read every early Slenderman series as a story about hegemonic masculinity and its effects on mental health. With these new creators, now that that's a given, we're seeing these plot points approached openly and directly, with art depicting Slenderman as this symbol of hegemony and violence that can then be problematized and addressed. For

example we're seeing organizations that are hunting and engaging with Slenderman on a governmental level, with fascism at their base.

In terms of what changes we're going to see to the formal elements of what makes a Slenderman series, the technology will be changing, and linked to that, what it means to make something that's "found footage" in 2025 vs. 2010. The question of what makes something authentic while using a phone (in lieu of analog media) is a major change in and of itself. In the modern Slenderverse, if you want to be successful, there's a really good market for quality "Slenderman sightings" on TikTok. If you want to get discovered by the mainstream (and not every creator does) then there's real marketing in knowing how your series gets clipped into short-form content and what a "clippable moment" looks like. What will people pull out of it and attach themselves to? On the flipside, there is a lot of nostalgia in the Slenderverse. We're still seeing a lot of costuming choices, for instance, that call back to 2010. It's a balancing act between paying homage and figuring out what to do with all of this contemporary material and marketing in a way that feels authentic.

In terms of thematic changes, Proxies are hugely being reinterrogated in ways that they weren't. Today we have more "out" systems that are making Slenderman media. Not that we didn't have them before, but good DID media representation is more important than ever before. A Proxy being a psychopath and someone who experiences switching can play towards the stigmatization of people with DID. How do you depict a Proxy in a way that gets the thematic resonance across of the psychological battery that Slenderman puts one under, in most of these series, without adding fuel to the fire regarding the vilification of people with DID? How do we express that the Proxies are still human? How do we express the idea of multiple people within one body as something other than monstrous, with the concepts of possession and insanity at the forefront of horror media? That's where our battle is now. I think it all comes down to pinpointing where the core of the problem (the trauma) is coming from for this person that's experiencing the negative effects of Slenderman, and not focusing so much on the mental problems being displayed.
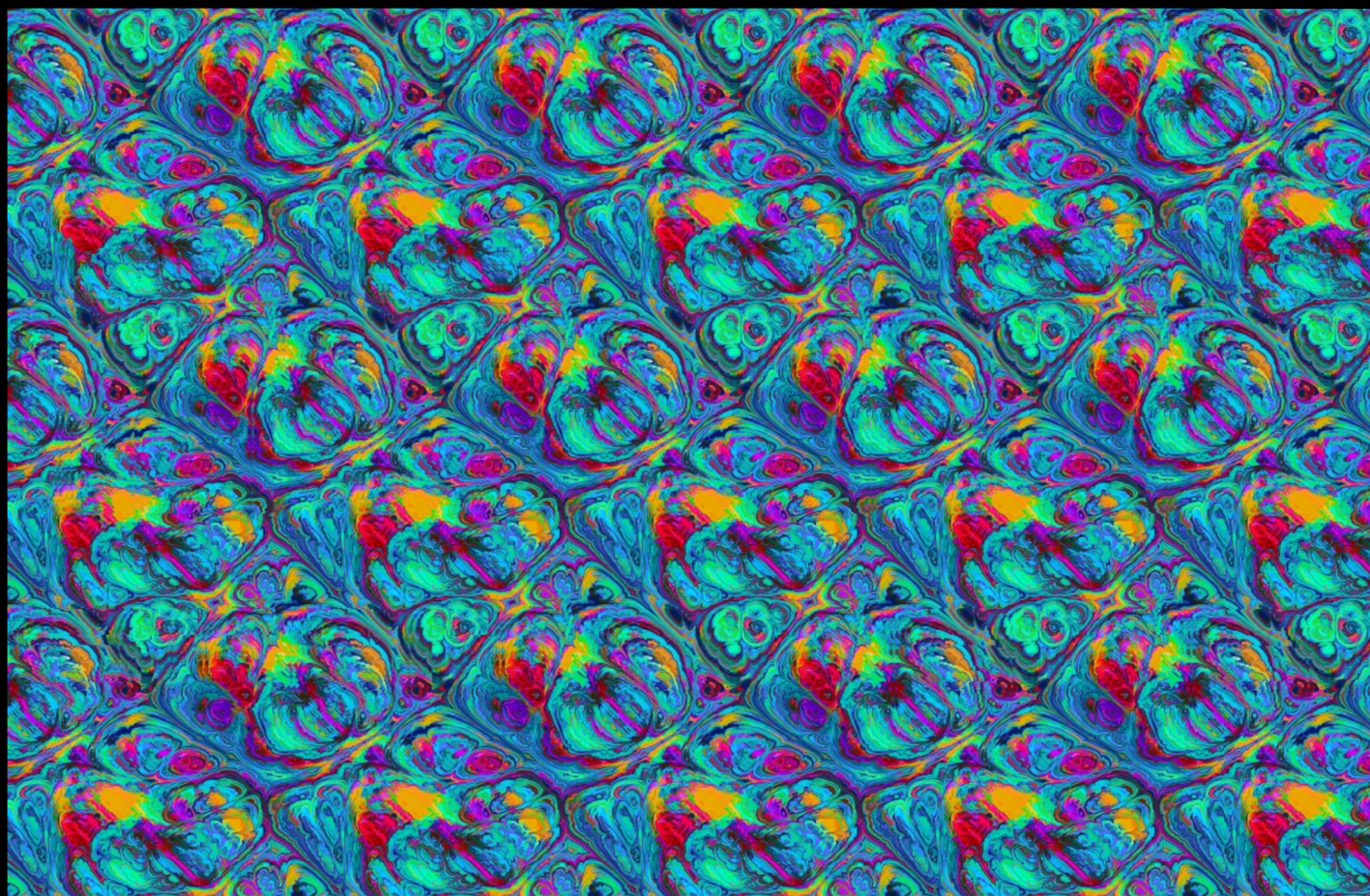
Do you have any recommendations from this rising slue of new Slenderverse series?

In a lot of ways, Red Red Hat is a really nice entry point to the new Slenderverse. A lot of the crossover content in Red Red Hat has important thematic underpinnings, but it's also a list of great series to go watch. So, go watch Red Red Hat and get the list from the big crossover episode. Podcast Unknown is another really good place to reference, as they interview others and give deeper insights into characters and creators. Start from here, and you'll find a whole network of great new Slenderverse content to enjoy!
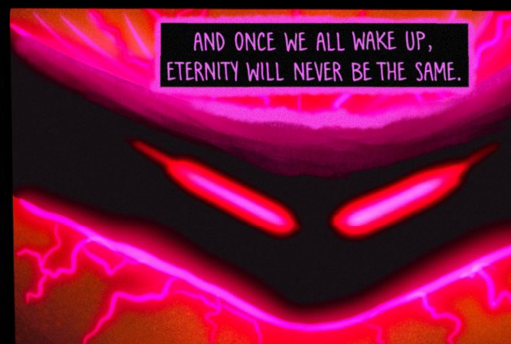
Rainer socials:

Bluesky:
death-cafe.bsky.social
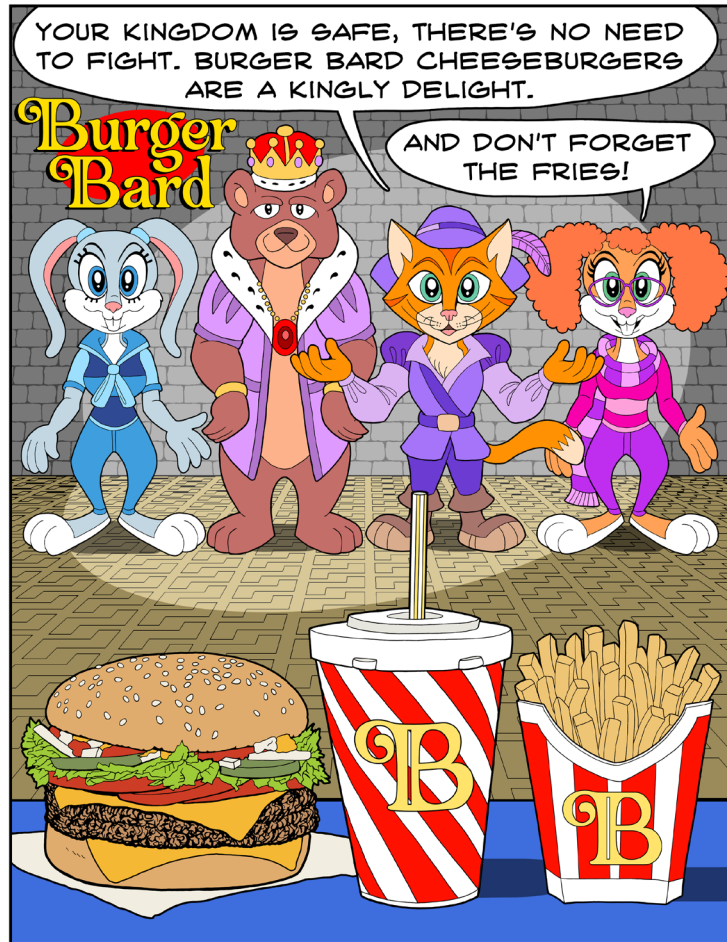
///

wyfio

FLAP

CREATED BY

EMILIANO TLACAELEL

SLENDER MAN

Article/ Artwork by
Austeria
Assisted by Lili Ardat

S lenderman, the infamous urban legend born from the internet, has embedded himself in popular culture over the past fifteen years, leaving behind a paper trail of notoriety while haunting the imaginations of youths worldwide. What makes this man-made monster so captivating?

What could compel crimes in his name, and media based on this creature to continue to develop, whose origins started on a niche forum? The forum was titled Something Awful, and the year was 2009. A theme for the weekly "Photoshop Phriday" photo editing contest was proposed—edit an everyday photograph with a paranormal twist. Some one-off theme that surely would be buried in short order, like any other slung-together meme featured on an internet social. But that wasn't the case.

A creature emerged, created by a man named Eric Knudsen, known to others as Victor Surge. His simple entry consisted of two black-and-white images, a tall, uncanny creature with tentacle-like arms, which hang unnaturally by its side, standing in a backdrop of a playground. A child, the main focus of the shot, stops and smiles as they climb up an older-style playground slide. The children seem unaware of this dark entity.

> ## "What makes this man-made monster so captivating?"

(SA Forum Screenshot)

Another image, more distorted and less compelling, shows a faceless figure behind a group of teenagers. Again, no one seems aware of what lurks behind them. Knudsen's creature lore states that the photos uploaded were the only remaining images salvaged from a fire that consumed a library in Stirling City. The photographs were stated to be taken the same day that fourteen children vanished, the photographer also going missing three years later. This photoshop contest theme was not a novel concept. Throughout history, there have been photographs of caught-on-camera paranormal activity. The earliest being, from 1860, is said to be a self-portrait of a man named William G. Mumler, wherein a likeness of his deceased cousin appears, setting off many more caught-on-camera accounts of the supernatural. Regardless of the techniques used to create these images, from digital manip-ulation to using double exposure with film cameras over one hundred fifty years ago, the often intentionally grainy results giving off a vibe of authentically aged records, or an intrinsic, disruptive energy that causes digital video to "glitch out" or otherwise be incomplete.

"images salvaged from a fire that consumed a library in Stirling City."

Illustration of Mulmer
"Spirit photographer"

Knudsen has said he was Heavily influenced by the author H.P. Lovecraft, known for his supernatural and sci-fi stories. But Knudsen wasn't the one who came up with the tentacle-like appendages that are said to cause amnesia. In fact, Knudsen sparked a collective brainstorming session, with many people contributing to the mythos, piecing together this creature like Frankenstein's monster. There is not just one creator, but many, making this fictional character Unique among internet creations.

The aesthetic of the images Knudsen shared remains a staple in many ARGs still being developed today—usually a black-and-white photo, often filtered using a simple but effective binarization tool. Its enduring influence is evident, from the latest analog horror to the fan art that sprang up in the wake of his original, fateful post. Even Hollywood seems to have drawn aesthetic influence, particularly in the "found footage" horror subgenre. However, this style predates Slenderman by a decade, with The Blair Witch Project widely regarded as the breakthrough, seminal example.

Marble Hornets took this creature and plunged him into the ARG scene, inspiring other series such as TribeTwelve and EverymanHYBRID. Over time, the "Slenderverse"—a collective of works featuring the character—was formed.
Just as with the Something Awful threads, many hands and minds helped shape what has been described as an 'open-source' mythos. Web series and ARGs arguably played an outsized role in defining Slenderman's story and strengthening his hold on those he captivates. However, other contributions, such as online fiction "creepypastas" and fan art communities, played a significant role, especially in the earlier days.

Image from reddits r/analog_horror
analog horror page- created by user Justadudewholikesart

Many series use
a similar binarization tool

"There is not just one creator, but many, making this fictional character Unique among internet creations."

"A man accused of killing two cops and a civilian before committing suicide with his wife in Las Vegas on Sunday often dressed up in costume as Slender Man"

"Jeff the killer"

Age 13

"Jeff the killer" assailant

Similarly to Slenderman, Jeff the Killer is also an online horror creation, emerging from the creepypasta subgenre—a collaborative space where Slenderman himself quickly became a viral sensation. Consisting of numerous stories, mostly written by teenagers and young adults, this growing body of online horror fiction fueled the character's widespread appeal. Just as fire ravaged the library in Slenderman's origin, the fascination with this figure spread uncontrollably, burning its way through countless websites and corners of the internet, leaving behind the crispy remains of endless creativity.

> "JUST AS FIRE RAVAGED THE LIBRARY IN SLENDERMAN'S ORIGIN, THE FASCINATION WITH THIS FIGURE SPREAD UNCONTROLLABLY"

Though unfortunately, with any fictional creature, there are some people who cannot separate reality from fiction. This monster became too real for some and hit mainstream news with a crime so senseless and brutal that it is still a topic of discussion. But this wasn't the first crime attached to a fictional character. Sometime in 2017, an 8th grader slit his face into a gruesome smile, then proceeded to kill his father's girlfriend. He said Jeff the Killer made him do it.
It is unfortunate that a fictional character will be dragged through the media because of the actions of the mentally troubled, in this case, youths. The Slenderman stabbings were also done by children nearly the same age. In police interrogation, one of the girls brought up the Jeff the Killer-inspired murders, stating that he was real.

CREEPY PASTA

"was influenced by the fictional character Slender Man to set her house on fire while her mother and brother slept inside"

Age 14

Slender Man stabbing assailants
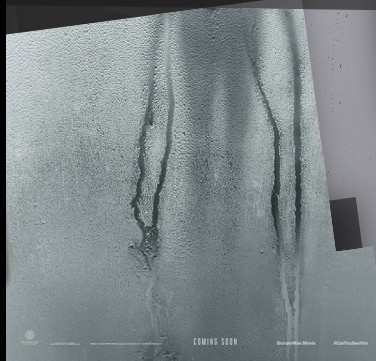(Victim survived)

Age 12

And in some sense, through their actions, fiction and reality merge—but in a more gruesome and tragic way than any ARG could ever portray. Waukesha Police Chief Russell (slenderman stabbing case) Jack was quoted saying, "The internet can be full of dark and wicked things. Unmonitored and unrestricted access to the internet by children is a growing and alarming problem." The narrative stuck.

"The killings also sent shockwaves through the Slenderverse creative community"

Between these two incidents, and others, a moral panic took hold not unlike the "Satanic Panic" of the 1980s that led to isolated tragedies being blamed on popular media and activities like Dungeons and Dragons and heavy metal music.

The killings also sent shockwaves through the Slenderverse creative community itself, leaving many creators stunned and sickened that something they had put their heart and soul into had been tied to something so horrible.

This scapegoating is a shameful deflection from real issues of violence, an inaccurate and unfair shifting of blame that the horror genre often has to contend with. The TINAG suspension of disbelief in ARGs and unfiction only muddies the waters and intensifies the misunderstanding of the medium and demonization of all fictional things occult.
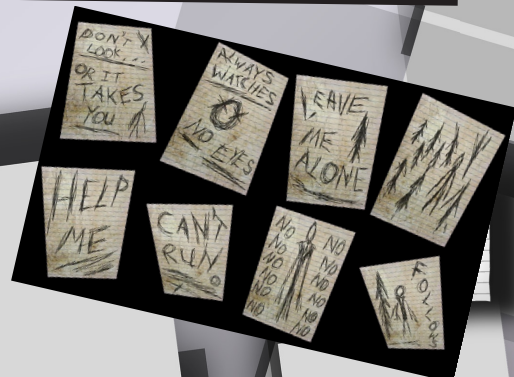
Slenderman not only branched out into ARG series but also transformed into video games, Slender: The Eight Pages being the first, as well as numerous indie films, and even a feature film based off of Marble Hornets.

Although some of the results were seen as exploitative of the Waukesha tragedy, specifically HBO's documentary Beware the Slenderman, and some were quite cynical cash grabs, others were enthusiastically received, the video games in particular. "Let's Play" style playthroughs from varied, big-name YouTubers helped spread the legend and boost the popularity of the character, at one point even overloading and incapacitating download links due to high demand on release.

> "Slenderman not only branched out into ARG series but also transformed into video games"

Games creator
Mark J. Hadley

In this issue of ARG Digest, we have assembled interviews with three prevalent voices from the Slenderverse scene, sharing their unique perspectives and insights. From Slenderman's ARG and webseries origins, to present-day chronicles of his history in the form of a three part documentary series, to efforts to promote and nurture its future, taking shape in a now-budding revival of Slenderseries - we believe these three give an excellent cross-section of the sprawling Slenderverse and the font of imagination and inspiration that accompany and comprise it.

And Slenderman certainly does seem to have a future, as he continues to develop and inspire. Once again, the shadowy figure stalks the minds of potential creators. This online creature has somehow shapeshifted into new-wave folklore, one that nearly sixteen years after its creation continues to be a long-lasting staple for horror fans everywhere. Accessible to anyone who cares to join in and pick up a camera or pen or brush, Slenderman remains uniquely iconic and specific to internet legend and culture, unfiction and ARGs.

Long may he reign.

Want to submit a promo?

Here is some information on how.

Promotions can be either half a page or one page, with a maximum of a two page allowance. (there may be exceptions to this)
**Promos are free to submit,** but there is an option to commission a promo to be made. It costs $5 USD for half a page and $10 USD for one full page, with a maximum allowance of 2 pages (there may be exceptions to this).

The required dimensions are **8.625 inches in width and 11.25 inches in height**, with a printing resolution of **300-400 dpi** and pixels set at 3450 x 4500. You can email the graphic artist at **austererr@gmail.com**. Please upload the image on Google Drive.

Magazines are released bi-monthly. If you miss the submission date, your advertisement will be placed in the following magazine. In some cases, promos may be rejected, but you will be given a reason.

Promos do not have to be ARG exclusively; they can be **any indie media**. The ARG community is a mixed medium, and I welcome all creators to submit promos for their projects.
On the following page, I provide an example of where to place text in your promo. If you go outside the guide, **your promo will be resized and given a border.**
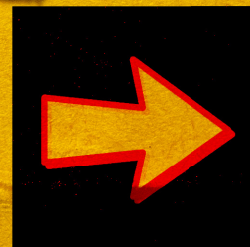
Example page

Keep Text

in here

Must be 18+ to submit promo
or parental consent emailed
 with the submission

Magazine Credits

Creators

Austeria

Design/Magazine construction/ Formatting

🦋 https://bsky.app/profile/austeria.bsky.social

Contact email:
austererr@gmail.com

G.P Reeds

Lead Writer & Interviewer

https://www.youtube.com/@gpreeds

https://bsky.app/profile/gpreeds.bsky.social 🦋

https://x.com/GPReeds

Staff Writter and website Design/host

Lili Ardat

🦋 https://bsky.app/profile/ardat.bsky.social

Freelance writers

Aaron Albright
Twitter "X"
@supremeyeetjpeg

Chandler Arndt
Twitter "X"
@StoryStorage_

ARG related Discords

Unfettered

ARG Digests Announcements can be found in this discord,
Admins:
Austeria (Magazine creator), Lili Ardat (Staff writter)
and Geminycricket
Mods:
Luna, Faustus and G.P Reeds (co- creator)

Reeders Corner

G.P Reeds Discord

You can find an invite to these discords
listed on argdigest.com

ARG Digest social account

https://bsky.app/profile/arg-digest.bsky.social 🦋